

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) A method for treating hepatic disease or improving liver function comprising administering to a subject in need thereof, who has not been hepatectomized, an effective amount of ~~valine~~-L-valine in the form of a composition which contains ~~valine~~-L-valine as an active ingredient and which is entirely free of other amino acids ~~or substantially free of other amino acids~~ as an effective ingredient, and wherein said ~~valine~~-L-valine has a therapeutic effect on hepatic disease *per se*.

2. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) A method for improving liver function comprising administering to a subject in need thereof who has not been hepatectomized an effective amount of ~~valine~~-L-valine in the form of a food composition which contains ~~valine~~-L-valine as an active ingredient and which is entirely free of other amino acids ~~or substantially free of other amino acids~~ as an active ingredient, and wherein said ~~valine~~-L-valine *per se* has an effect of improving, and does improve, the function of said liver.

3. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 2 wherein the food composition is a functional food.

4. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 1 wherein the hepatic disease is hepatitis.

5. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 1 wherein the hepatic disease is hepatic insufficiency.

6. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 1 wherein the hepatic disease is cirrhosis.

7. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 1 wherein valine is L-valine.

8. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 2 wherein valine is L-valine.

9. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 1 wherein the administration is by injection.

10. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 1 wherein the administration is by infusion.

11. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 1 wherein the administration is by the oral route.

12. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) A kit for treating hepatic disease or improving liver function comprising an effective amount of L-valine~~valine~~ in the form of a composition which contains L-valine~~valine~~ as an active ingredient and which is entirely free of other amino acids ~~or substantially free of other amino acids~~ as an active ingredient, and instructions for treating hepatic disease or

improving the liver functions for a patient who has not been hepatectomized.

13. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) A kit for improving liver function comprising an effective amount of L-valinevaline in the form of a food composition which contains L-valinevaline as an active ingredient and which is entirely free of other amino acids ~~or substantially free of other amino acids~~, and in which said L-valinevaline has an effect of *per se* improving the function of the liver, and instructions for improving the liver function for a patient who has not been hepatectomized.

14. (Withdrawn) The kit according to claim 13 wherein the food composition is a functional food.

15. (Withdrawn) The kit according to claim 12, wherein the instructions are for hepatitis, hepatic insufficiency, or cirrhosis.

16. (Withdrawn) The kit according to claim 13 wherein the instructions are for hepatitis, hepatic insufficiency or cirrhosis.

Claims 17-18. (Cancelled)

19. (Withdrawn) The kit according to claim 12 wherein the composition is in a form for injection.

20. (Withdrawn) The kit according to claim 12 wherein the composition is an infusion preparation.

21. (Withdrawn) The kit according to claim 12 wherein the composition is an oral preparation.

22. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) A method for treating hepatic disease selected from the group consisting of acute hepatitis, chronic hepatitis, hepatic insufficiency, and cirrhosis comprising administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of L-valinevaline.

23. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 22 wherein the acute hepatitis and chronic hepatitis are caused by a hepatitis virus.

24. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) A method for treating chronic hepatopathy or improving liver function comprising administering to a subject in need thereof, who has not been hepatectomized, an effective amount of L-valinevaline in the form of a composition which contains L-valinevaline as an active ingredient and which is entirely free of other amino acids ~~or substantially free of other amino acids~~ as an active ingredient, and wherein said L-valinevaline has a therapeutic effect on chronic hepatopathy *per se*.

25. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) A kit for treating chronic hepatopathy or improving liver function comprising an effective amount of L-valinevaline in the form

of a composition which contains L-valinevaline as an active ingredient and which is entirely free of other amino acids ~~or substantially free of other amino acids~~ as an active ingredient, and instructions for treating chronic hepatopathy or improving the liver functions for a patient who has not been hepatectomized.

26. (Currently Amended) A method for treating or improving a low albumin level comprising administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of L-valinevaline in the form of a composition which contains L-valinevaline as an effective ingredient and which is entirely free of other amino acids ~~or substantially free of other amino acids~~ as an effective ingredient.

27. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 26, wherein the low albumin level accompanies a lowering of the hepatic function.

28. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 26, wherein the composition is a food composition.

29. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 28, wherein the composition is a functional food.

30. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 26, wherein the low albumin level is a low albumin level in blood.

31. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 26, wherein the low albumin level is a low serum albumin level.

32. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 26, wherein the low albumin level is hypoalbuminemia.

Claim 33. (Cancelled)

34. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 26, wherein the composition is an injection or an infusion preparation.

35. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 26, wherein the composition is an oral preparation.